

THE CAPTAIN WHO ELECTS TO GO DOWN WITH HIS SHIP IS NOT A HERO, BUT A COWARD

—HERBERT QUICK SAYS TODAY

BY HERBERT QUICK,

Author of "On Board the Good Ship Earth," Etc., and Editor of Farm and Fireside.

There is an unwritten law that a captain who loses his ship shall never have another.

This "law" is merely unwritten bosh of the cruelest sort. It is a good thing that an exception to this rule is to be made in the case of Captain Inch of the Volturmo. He was not to blame for the loss of the Volturmo, and if he did his full duty well and efficiently in the crisis of her sinking he is entitled to a command.

There is another bit of fiendish, unwritten insanity in the "law" that a captain must sink with his ship.

A number of such instances are remembered. A vessel for some reason sinks. Her captain does all he can to save her passengers. He gets passengers and crew into the boats, launches the boats, bids everybody goodbye, and again takes his place on the deck. If the ship actually sinks under his feet, if I understand this idiotic "law," he may swim, grasp a spar or hencoop and save himself—but his foot must press the last plank of the vessel as it goes under water.

There is about as much sense to this as to the Japanese custom of committing suicide because the emperor dies.

To be sure, if the captain is never to have a command again, and is to be blamed forever for the work of the elements, he may choose to go down with his ship rather than live in poverty like a disbarred lawyer, stripped of his profession; but this is not the real reason. The real reason for these self-immolations is the unwritten bosh which leads some landmen I know to speak in terms of high approbation of a captain who stands on the bridge and sinks with his ves-

sel while everybody else gets off in the boats.

The place of the captain is on his ship as long as there is anyone on board who can be saved. It is on board the ship as long as there is a crew to command or any hope of saving her.

And when the passengers and crew are in the boats, it is the captain's place to be with them if he can leave his ship. He, better than anyone else, is able to look after the welfare of the castaways and plan their escape. And a captain who has engineered matters in one wreck so as to save a part or all of his passengers and crew is a better captain for that very experience. I would rather consign myself to a ship commanded by Captain Inch than to sail with a captain to whom wrecks, conflagrations and the use of lifeboats are matters of theory only.

Looked at from the viewpoint of common sense, the captain who goes down with his ship merely because it is his ship is not a hero at all, but a coward.

DIARY OF FATHER TIME

In modern days many men are financially ruined by their enemies through various tricks and schemes. Years ago when the King of Siam wanted to ruin anyone he made him a present of a white elephant. The white elephant has an enormous appetite and, being sacred, it is a crime to let it die, so that the gift finally entailed financial ruin on its recipient.

Thirty-two per cent of the 7,000,000 working women in this country are under age.